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ABSTRACT

Meeting highlights and a background briefing report are provided from a policy seminar, one in a series of monthly staff seminars titled "Family Centered Social Policy: The Emerging Agenda." The highlights summarize remarks by three panelists. Alan Hershey describes the Teenage Parent Demonstration in New Jersey and Illinois and addresses the operational lessons emerging thus far. Jodie Levin-Epstein bases her remarks on the Center for Law and Social Policy's monitoring and surveying of various states' implementation of the teen parent provisions of the Family Support Act. Paul Offner discusses employment programs for teen parents in Wisconsin and Ohio. An outline of points in the discussion concludes the highlights. The background briefing report begins with a look at the data and research that helped shape the welfare reform legislation. It then describes briefly community, statewide, and federal demonstration programs that have been exploring various ways to help teen mothers complete school and enter the labor force. It discusses what these programs are learning about the problems and circumstances teen mothers face. Key provisions of the Family Support Act are outlined, and some implementation issues with which states are dealing are discussed in light of the demonstration programs' experience. A list of 35 selected references are appended. (YLB)

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TEENAGE MOTHERS AND THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT: WHAT WORKS---"CARROTS" OR "STICKS"?

March 1, 1991, Mansfield Room (S.207), U.S. Capitol

Panelists: **Alan Hershey,** senior researcher, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. and deputy director of the Teen Parent Demonstration Program
Jodie Levin-Epstein, senior state policy advocate, Center for Law and Social Policy
Paul Offner, legislative assistant, office of Senator Moynihan

Moderator: **Theodora Ooms,** director, Family Impact Seminar

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BACKGROUND BRIEFING REPORT.....pages 1 to 22

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Teenage Mothers and the Family Support Act: What Works---"Carrots" or "Sticks"?

Background Briefing Report
by
Theodora Ooms
and
Todd Owen

This policy seminar is one in a series of monthly seminars for policy staff titled, *Family Centered Social Policy: The Emerging Agenda*, conducted by the **Family Impact Seminar**, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Research and Education Foundation, 1100 Seventeenth Street, N.W., The Tenth Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036, 202/467-5114.

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TEENAGE MOTHERS AND THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT: WHAT WORKS---"CARROTS" OR "STICKS"?

Highlights of seminar meeting held on March 1, 1991, Mansfield Room, S.207 in the U.S. Capitol. (A supplement to the Background Briefing Report.)

Theodora Ooms opened the seminar meeting by reminding the audience that the subjects of the seminar discussions today were very young women, ages 16-19, usually living in difficult economic and social circumstances who are being required by the Family Support Act to juggle the demands of attending school, or job training, with the responsibilities of being a parent---tasks that would be overwhelming to most teenagers who are far more privileged. Ooms then pointed out that the title of the seminar placed a somewhat unfair burden on the panelists which she wanted to remove. It was much too early in implementation of the Act to expect a definitive answer to the question, What works---"carrots" or "sticks"? However all three panelists had some very interesting preliminary findings to share.

Alan Hershey, introduced as the first panelist, is a senior researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), deputy director of the Teenage Parent Demonstration Evaluation, and director of MPR's evaluation of the REACH program, New Jersey's implementation of JOBS. He said he would first briefly describe the Teenage Parent Demonstration in New Jersey and Illinois and then speak about the operational lessons emerging thus far. At a later time results of the impact evaluation will become available---impact of the program on teen school participation, birth rates and employment.

Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD)

The TPD under the guidelines set forth by the funder, the federal Department of Health and Human Services, was intended to have both "carrots" and "sticks" built into its design. Thus the states were expected to implement programs which were both **demanding** and **supportive**. They were considered **demanding** because of mandatory participation, a stiff participation objective of 30 hours a week of productive activity, and the clear objective of moving teen mothers towards employment and self-sufficiency.

The programs were intended to be **supportive** by offering a wide array of services, education programs, job training, improved child support enforcement and assistance with child care and transportation. Programs were expected to provide a strong case management function which acted as the "glue" to hold this all together and provided the teens with encouragement, support and guidance and coordinated their access to the range of services.

The Demonstration was run in Camden and Newark, New Jersey, and Chicago, Illinois. The programs revolved around a special case management unit with a staff set up separately, both physically and bureaucratically, from the AFDC public assistance agency.

Participant characteristics. The project focused on first time AFDC parents under the age of twenty with one child. From late 1987 until early 1990, about 5,000 teens in these sites were identified as eligible and were divided randomly into participant and control groups as they entered the program. Comparison of these groups after a two year follow-up period will yield estimates of the impact of the program. Nearly all the participants were female and their average age was under

18. Half of them lived with neither of their parents. One-third to one-quarter had basic skills below the sixth grade level, while the average basic skill level was the eighth grade.

Participation process. The teen parents were identified from AFDC files and sent letters instructing them to come in for the program's intake session. Those who did not respond initially were contacted repeatedly. At intake, after they all completed a detailed baseline questionnaire, they were divided into control and participant groups and the participants were assigned case managers.

The participants then went through a set of various workshops. At one site this process was called 'boot camp' because it was very regimented and tightly scheduled. After the workshops the program became more individualized with some teens staying in high school and others getting GED classes, job training, or job search help. Child care assistance was available to all participants. (For more information on TPD see page 7.)

TPD Operational Lessons

Hershey said that many had been concerned that mandatory participation for teens was not feasible, others that it would be punitive. He believed that the TPD has shown that "mandatory participation can work and be implemented in the context of the public assistance agency. And more importantly, required participation is actually a part of constructive intervention in the teen parents' lives."

Program staff pointed out that their insistence on participation gave the participants structured, clear expectations that had been missing from their lives and could help to explain some of the difficulties they had experienced. Hershey has come to view required participation not only as a stick but also as part of the "process of pulling people along in a constructive way".

Enforcement and sanctions. Although 82 percent of all teenage parents identified as eligible for the demonstration eventually completed the intake, repeated call-in letters, sanction warnings and sanctions were used heavily to bring the enrollment rate up to this point. Only about 45 percent responded to the first call-in, and had to be warned of the possibility of a sanction, and about 7 percent completed intake only after being sanctioned. About a quarter of all the teenage parents were sanctioned with a grant reduction at some point---either for failure to attend the initial intake, or later for failure to attend program activities.

Making mandatory participation requirements effective requires persistent case managers, Hershey noted. "The FSA does not require a case management staff but at least in the case of teen parents, I don't see a way that you can make a program mandatory in a constructive way, not just in a punitive way, with out strong case managers."

Hershey stressed that this process involved more than just sending threatening letters. It also included extensive personal communication and in some cases home visits.

TPD relevance to JOBS eligibility. Only a small number of the TPD participants, about 30 percent, would have been required to participate in the JOBS program under the rules governing the JOBS program (see figure 4 p.ix). This was mainly because they were still in school or high school graduates. Hershey said however, that they found many high school graduates lacking in basic skills, just as many as those who had dropped out of school. In his view, JOBS requirements probably reflect some overestimation of the significance of a high school diploma as a ticket to self-sufficiency.

Additional program design features

Hershey highlighted a number of additional aspects of the program which the staff found to be important:
---Initial workshops conveyed useful information and enhanced skills but were also valuable opportunities for extended contact between the teens and the case managers, which contributed to making the teens more comfortable and interested in the program.

---The program offices showed the value of having a "special place" for teen parents which offered a hospitable refuge from their homes and neighborhoods.

---Since many existing services were geared towards adults, staff had to work hard to create services tailored especially to their teen clients' needs.

---Helping teens find suitable, personalized, child care was an important part of the case management function in addition to financing the care. (Note: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. is producing a series of reports on the TPD as this study evolves. See Hershey, 1990.)

Jodie Levin-Epstein, the second panelist, is senior state policy advocate for the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). This organization, Ooms said in her introduction, is an invaluable resource for information and technical assistance regarding the implementation of the Family Support Act (see Greenberg, 1990 and Family Matters, its quarterly newsletter). Levin-Epstein said she based her remarks on CLASP's monitoring and surveying of various states' implementation of the teen parent provisions of the Family Support Act. (For a description of teen parent provisions of FSA see p. 15-17.)

Levin-Epstein suggested that we may never have an answer to the question "What works 'carrots' or 'sticks'?" because voluntary teen parent programs are not being evaluated. While useful data will come from studies of mandatory programs, she cautioned that there will be no data from voluntary programs to compare these findings to.

But first she challenged several current assumptions about mandatory programs.

---Some believe that mandatory teen programs are essential because teens will not participate without the mandate. She pointed out that what little is known about voluntary programs suggests that this is not necessarily the case. Voluntary teen parent programs in Washington state and Massachusetts are operating at maximum capacity as did an earlier program in Chicago which has now been folded into JOBS. The administrator of the Chicago program reported recently that, while it took a lot of hard work and outreach, they had had few problems reaching maximum enrollment. Average participation lasted for two and a half years and was continuous by over 90 percent of the teens.

---Levin-Epstein also questioned the view that only mandatory programs can offer needed structure to teen parents' lives. She said those who administer voluntary programs, including the administrator of the Chicago program, contend that you can have structure in voluntary teen programs.

---Levin-Epstein believes that a voluntary program is clearly a more appropriate use of funds in times of budgetary stringency. "When you have limited funds," she said "it seems illogical to spend those limited funds on denying services when those limited monies could provide services to people who want them."

---Some may say that the question of a program for volunteers is moot, since the JOBS law requires participation. But this is a misreading of the law Levin-Epstein said. The JOBS law states that among the target populations (which include teen mothers who have dropped out of school) first consideration is to be given to volunteers. There is nothing in the law which precludes states from serving volunteers first among those outside the targets (including teen mothers who have remained in school). A state could, and some states do, run teen pregnancy programs that are entirely composed of exempt and non-exempt volunteers.

The impetus for the law was some seminal research which indicated a disproportionate use of AFDC benefits by certain groups, most especially women who first gave birth as teens. Levin-Epstein recommended two new sources of data on this population. A study by the Congressional Budget Office which offers much more detailed information on AFDC use by teens (see Adams and Williams, 1990). And an analysis by Kristin Moore which indicates that the birth rate for 15 to 17 year olds has increased by 10 percent between 1986-1988, but most of the growth was concentrated in Florida, California, and Illinois.

Key provisions of the JOBS Act that affect teen parents Levin-Epstein listed as:

---JOBS is contingent upon available resources yet many states are simply not going to find the resources to serve even everyone in the target groups. It seems clear that only a small percentage of AFDC recipients will be able to access JOBS services.

---Participation Rates. According to the statute, states must reach mandated participation rates in order to receive federal matching funds. States are reporting difficulty meeting these rates. While the funding remains constant, participation rates began at 7 percent in 1990, escalating each year up to 20 percent. Under HHS rules, the group of persons counting towards a state's participation rate must average 20 hours a week of program activities.

According to Levin-Epstein, states may find that turning to teen mothers can be a relatively inexpensive and easy way to help meet these rates. By enrolling teen mothers in school in JOBS, those states can meet participation requirements and have the component activity paid by the school system. The cost and utilization of child care becomes the variable the state needs to consider.

---One target population for the JOBS program is those under the age of twenty-four who haven't completed high school. Teen mothers are often part of this target. This target is important because states must expend 55 percent of its resources on the target population or they won't receive maximum federal financial participation. One target group is comprised of custodial parents under 24 who have not completed high school and are not enrolled in high school or its equivalency at time of AFDC application. Second, the FSA contains a set of special rules that say that---with limited exceptions---states must emphasize high school completion for teen parents who have dropped out of school.

Special FSA Provisions for Teen Parents

---FSA allows states to require teens to participate full time whereas older AFDC clients with a child under 3 years of age are required only to participate half time.

---Teens may be required to participate as soon as the child is born.

---Teen mothers, with few exceptions, are expected to be placed in an education component.

---The law makes distinctions between younger and older teens with 18 to 19 year olds being more likely to receive job training.

Key findings of CLASP's six-state survey

CLASP conducted a survey of six states and one county (FL, IL, MD, MN, OR, RI and San Francisco County) to try and obtain an early snapshot of how states were implementing the teen parent provisions. At the time of the initial survey, (summer, 1990) the states had virtually no data on teen parents. Levin-Epstein reported that the survey suggested at least three major issues that were not explicitly addressed in the Act's provisions.

- **Preeducation services.** The law doesn't recognize that some teens with multiple service needs must be "stabilized" before they can take advantage of education or job training programs. For these teen mothers it can take some weeks to identify and address various barriers before she can effectively participate in JOBS or return to school.

- **Appropriate component placement.** JOBS is prescriptive about both timing and type of educational component placement. HHS rules define educational placements as high school alternative, high school, or any high school equivalency program. Literacy or basic adult education programs aren't allowable unless they are part of an alternative program. Most of the states surveyed approve alternative programs but there is great difficulty finding available spaces in such programs, and yet a number of those states do not expressly permit good cause for non-participation even when a needed alternative slot is not available or the quality of an available program is really poor.

- **Support services.** The law requires that child care and transportation be made available. In their survey, three states said transportation was somewhat of a problem and even more saw it as a serious problem. Levin-Epstein concluded by saying that dismayingly little is being done in states regarding infant child care for teen parents and their children. "It is an opportunity to focus on child development issues but as of now it is a missed opportunity which hopefully will be addressed in the years ahead."

The final panelist, **Paul Offner** who has recently joined Senator Moynihan's staff has a rich background to offer today's discussion, Ooms said. He is both a former Wisconsin State Senator and was also recently deputy director of human services for Ohio.

Offner's first point was that fewer and fewer states may end up doing teen parent programs. Many states are not investing in setting up the programs that were anticipated when the Family Support Act was passed. He pointed out that, as Alan Hershey suggested, however you run them, teen programs are expensive. States and the country are going through a recession, the available resources for the Family Support Act are not there and teen programs frequently fall by the wayside.

Both liberal and conservative oriented programs are expensive. Offner said the notion that you can run a teen program inexpensively by sanctioning and not having a lot of services is wrong. A conservative program based on sanctions involves challenges, hearings, and due process, all of which are expensive. There is no cheap way to do a teen parent program. On this point Offner said he disagreed with Levin-Epstein when she said that as the money gets tighter states are going to look more to these teen programs to meet participation requirements. He believes the opposite is true. States will look elsewhere because it is easier per dollar invested to meet the participation rates with non-teens.

Wisconsin and Ohio programs: "carrots" and "sticks"

Offner then turned to a discussion of the two state programs that he was most familiar with---Wisconsin and Ohio. The LEAP program in Ohio is limited to teen parents and uses both bonuses and sanctions. Teen parents who attend school receive a bonus of $62 a month added to their welfare checks and those who don't attend school receive a reduction of $62 in their checks. In contrast Learnfare in Wisconsin extends to all teens and operates solely with sanctions, removing the AFDC teen mother from the AFDC grant if teens are not in school (for additional program details see p. 9-12).

The Learnfare program is very controversial and illustrates the key role practitioners play in program implementation. Offner mentioned that less than a year ago the legislative audit bureau put out a report which showed that many of the front line workers do not like Learnfare. Offner said it is important to have their support because they are the ones who make these programs succeed or fail. Some of them candidly replied in the survey that they don't mind sabotaging the program because they think it is unfair or it is punitive. Offner reiterated that because it involves two separate bureaucracies, education and welfare, the program's success depends even more than usual on the willingness of the front line workers in each agency to cooperate with each other.

This program (the FSA), more than most others, depends on a lot of people buying into its goals. In Wisconsin this doesn't happen, there is an antipathy to the program. In Ohio the LEAP program is not controversial and most educators as well as welfare people think it is a reasonable initiative. Offner added that a rigorous evaluation of the Ohio program is ongoing, including a control group throughout the state, but there are no results available from the study yet.

According to Offner there is a very important advantage of a bonus over a sanction, namely that bonuses are much easier to implement. For example teen parents who are sanctioned are able to request a hearing where they present excuses, some legitimate and others not---such as their baby was sick, they were sick, transportation broke down, etc.---which, with limited resources, are impossible to verify. In Milwaukee it became a running joke that the requirements of the Learnfare program could be avoided with simple excuses presented to the review board---some teens become adept at "gaming the system". By contrast, LEAP's bonus payments are given only to those who actually attend school, which is relatively easy to verify.

Child care regulatory barriers

Offner believes that day care is a serious issue with teen parents. Ohio, like many industrial states, has very rigorous regulations regarding day care which limit the use of state or federal funds to licensed or certified day care. While he knew this was a subject of debate Offner said "there is no question in my mind that limiting state day care funds to regulated day care has an enormous negative impact on the JOBS program and particularly for the teen parent population."

Offner pointed out that teen parents more than others need a lot of flexibility in child care. They frequently have irregular hours, not nine-to-five, so they need convenient day care. Moreover, they notoriously do not want to take their child to a stranger or a center, and are much more likely to receive it from a relative, friend, or neighbor. But Ohio will not pay for this kind of day care.

Offner cited a Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation survey which reports that in Ohio only 14 percent of the teen parents enrolled in school are using publicly funded day care. This means that 86 percent are not taking advantage of the entitlement funding which is at least partly a result of the strictures the state puts on day care funding. Ooms followed this up by commenting that the Family Support Act allows payment to relatives if it is permitted by the states. (No one in

the audience knew how many states did permit using federal funds for unlicensed care. See folow up on p. ix.)

Points in the Discussion.

- The first question for the panelists was what was known about the financial consequences for the teens and their children of being sanctioned? Hershey responded that their study will eventually report on the long term follow-up of teen parents who received sanctions. However, program staff report that it is their impression that those teen parents who are sanctioned are generally those who have alternative sources of income and for whom the AFDC check was not critical, at least not at that time. (Some, when their situations change, do return to participate later on.) Levin-Epstein added that studies of this question were urgently needed. CLASP was familiar with the cases of parents in Wisconsin who as a result of sanctions became homeless.

- A participant commented that Hershey and the other panelists had referred to the range of family problems many teens had that needed to be addressed before they could participate in the programs. She then asked to what extent did staff in these programs reach out to the home, even making home visits, to find out what home problems there might be and how to get the teen's family to support her participation?

  Hershey responded that the TPD staff did do a lot of outreach into the homes and sometimes worked actively as allies with the teen's parents. But at other times there was little family to work with. Offner commented that in Ohio they take the case management role very seriously and have been successful in bringing their caseload down to a 1:50 client ratio which is very good for a statewide program. In Cincinnati, in addition they hired people from the community to go door to door to talk with teen parents who were not in school. But in Wisconsin case management was not a significant component of the original plan and was only incorporated into the program later.

- A member of the audience from Ohio spoke about a statewide school-based program she worked on in Ohio, the GRADS program which had provided a wide range of supportive services to pregnant and parenting teens for over ten years with resulting very high graduation rates. This program cooperated with and complemented the LEAP program. Levin-Epstein added that it will be a challenge for evaluators to try to assess the effects of LEAP separately from GRADS, since GRADS participation is often a key service in LEAP.

- A staffer from the Adolescent Family Life Office asked Hershey to explain the differences in participation rates between the three TDP sites. Hershey said many organizational and administrative factors contributed to these differences. For example, Newark had a much harder time establishing a system of quick response to non-attendance that was necessary to make the participation requirement credible.

- A member of staff from NIAAA raised the question about whether the mandatory nature of these programs did not also have an effect on the program staff's behavior. The TPD/HHS project officer expanded upon this theme and said it became apparent that the case managers were clearly also affected by the mandatoriness of the program. They worked hard to avoid sanctions and since participation was mandatory each client had to be worked with. In contrast, in the JOBS program if a client is unmotivated or unwilling the worker simply moves on to a more amenable client (of which there are many waiting in line).

Levin-Epstein challenged the assumption that workers are only motivated by mandatory programs. She pointed out that in Rhode Island the state awards performance-based contracts to community agencies so that they receive more money when they get more clients to participate.

- A member of the staff from the Congressional Research Service asked what was the rate of second births among the teen program participants in the TPD? Hershey replied that those data were not available yet, but clearly significant numbers were having second babies. The amazing fact was that some teens continued to participate fully even after having a second child.

- What was the record of child support collections in the TPD site asked a staff member of the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OSCE)? Hershey explained that although the local OCSE staff did participate in the initial workshops to provide the teen mothers with information about the benefits of establishing paternity and cooperating with child support, instead of perceiving the system as an adversary, there was relatively little change in the way child support enhancement was in fact handled by TDP sites.

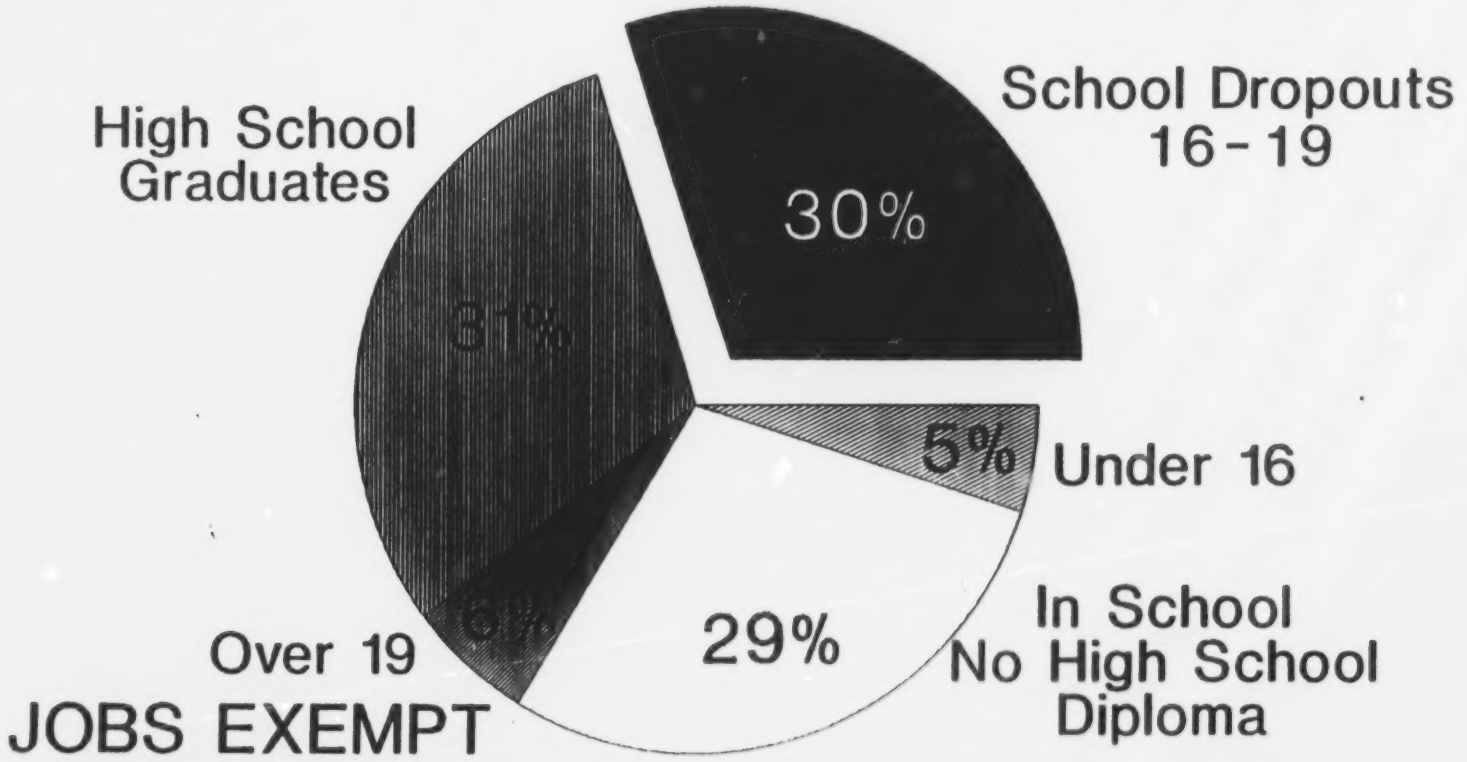
- There was some general discussion about the value of intensive mentoring programs which provided the teens with highly individualized attention but were extremely expensive; and about the need for case managers to develop good linkages with community based resources to refer their clients to.

- The final comments related back to the question of the type of child care needed and used by teen parents. Hershey said that in the TPD, while the majority used relatives and friends (who could be paid), there was a small increase in the use of formal care by program participants compared with the control group.

Offner reiterated his point that the clearest message he is hearing from the states, albeit based so far on anecdote, is that formal child care does not accommodate teen parents' needs. This is especially because teen mothers are in a transition, trying out new behaviors and varied schedules, and formal child care providers want regularity, commitment, and preferably 9-5 schedules.

* **FOLLOW UP:** Information about which states fund unlicensed child care will soon be available from the Childrens' Defense Fund which is completing a study of state subsidized child care, including information on reimbursement rates and eligibility.
Contact: Sherri Lookner or Gina Adams at 202/628-8787.

FIGURE 4
JOBS ELIGIBILITY AT INTAKE*



MATHEMATICA Policy Research, Inc

* BASED ON INTAKE DATA FOR TEEN PARENT DEMONSTRATION SAMPLE

TEENAGE MOTHERS AND THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT: WHAT WORKS—"CARROTS" OR "STICKS"?

Background Briefing Report

INTRODUCTION

Women who become mothers during their adolescence are more likely to drop out of school, receive public assistance, and have long spells of welfare dependency than women who postpone childbearing. For these reasons the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA) singles out teenage mothers on welfare for special attention and requires them, with few exceptions, to complete their education and engage in JOBS related activities.

Since the late seventies hundreds of community and school-based programs have offered a wide range of health, education, and social services to pregnant teens and teen mothers. The main focus of these programs was to improve health outcomes for the mother and infant, delay the birth of additional children, and help the mother with her parenting responsibilities. More recently some of these programs have placed a stronger emphasis on providing education, training, and job-related services (see Ooms and Herendeen, October 1989). For the most part teen mothers participation in all these programs has been voluntary.

As a result of the Family Support Act teenage mothers across the nation who receive AFDC are, for the first time, being required to complete their education and engage in employment-related activities. Failure to comply with these requirements without good cause results in monetary sanctions (through a reduction in the welfare check). Although the Act lists a number of circumstances which would exempt teens from these requirements it is the clear intent of the law that exemptions for AFDC teen mothers would be unusual.

Some view this legislation as a welcome opportunity to help steer teen mothers away from years of dependency on welfare and believe that requirements and sanctions in the law are necessary to redirect existing incentives and change teenage mothers' behavior. Others believe the new law's mandates are too narrowly focused on completion of schooling, and that sanctions are counterproductive and unnecessary. And some fear that while the FSA will indeed help some young mothers, those teen mothers at highest risk of long-term dependency will not benefit since they are likely to be exempted from its requirements and the services they need to overcome multiple barriers to effective participation will not be available.

To what extent are the requirements in the law appropriate and realistic? What kinds of barriers to participation in education or employment do young mothers face? What kinds of supportive services do these mothers need to be able to juggle these dual responsibilities? Are sanctions effective? Are rewards helpful?

As they move somewhat unevenly to implement the teen parent provisions of the FSA, states are developing different approaches to answer these questions. Meanwhile, in recent years a number of community, statewide, and federal demonstration programs have been exploring a variety of

ways to help teen mothers complete school and enter the labor force. The strategies they use include various combinations of "carrots"---support services and even monetary bonuses---and "sticks"---requirements followed by monetary sanctions.

Each of these demonstrations defines the target group somewhat differently, and provides a different mix of rewards, services, and sanctions. Yet they all share in the FSA's basic goal to help teenage mothers improve their employability and take steps towards becoming economically self-sufficient. This report will briefly describe these different programs and what they are learning about the problems and circumstances teen mothers face. While the programs are still too young to have produced firm evidence of program impact, some preliminary lessons are emerging about the most effective way to design and implement such programs. We then outline the key provisions of the Family Support Act and discuss some of the implementation issues states are dealing with in the light of the demonstration programs' experience. We begin however with a brief look at the data and research that helped shape the welfare reform legislation.

Note: "Teenage" is used throughout this report to refer to youth ages 13 through age 19, unless they are specifically designated as minor teens, that is under age 18 years old.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW INCOME AND AFDC TEENAGE MOTHERS

(Sources: Adams & Williams, 1990; Bane & Ellwood, 1983; Committee on Ways and Means, 1990; Ellwood, 1986 & 1988; Harris, 1989 & forthcoming; Moore, 1990; Upchurch and McCarthy, 1989; Zill et al., 1991)

Teen mothers only make up a small proportion of the AFDC population. In 1988 only 7 percent of AFDC mothers were teenagers. The reason they are singled out in the legislation is not because they constitute a large proportion of current AFDC recipients but because teen mothers who drop out of school are at high risk for long-term welfare dependency. In 1986 roughly one-third of AFDC mothers age 30 or under had first given birth in their teens. A national study of the dynamics of welfare dependency found that 40 percent of young, never-married mothers who entered the welfare program when their child was less than 3 years old spent 10 years or more on AFDC (Bane, and Ellwood, 1983; Ellwood, 1986).

This study found considerable diversity within the welfare population. Many poor, single mothers use welfare for only a short transitional period of support. Others experience several "spells" of AFDC receipt. But an important minority collect AFDC for ten years or more. Changes in family composition (births and marriages) accounted for more of the entrances and exits than changes in income and employment. Unfortunately this and other studies of the AFDC population did not separately examine the experience of teen mothers in any detail.

What do we know about the economic and family circumstances of teenage mothers and their patterns of dependency on public assistance? Two major findings stand out from a couple of national studies, reinforced by a few smaller studies, which have recently examined this question. First, teen mothers' and their children's experience while on welfare is characterized by change and instability. Over the course of the first few years of parenthood young mothers experience many changes in their living arrangements, marital status, sources of support ,and patterns of welfare dependency. Second, while the association between teenage parenthood, poverty, and dependency remains strong, there is considerable diversity within the population of teen mothers in general and teen AFDC recipients in particular. Among the principal findings from these studies most relevant to implementation of the Family Support Act are the following.

Teen Birth Rates. Since the mid-seventies, the birth rate among teens has changed little although an increasing proportion of teenage women giving birth were unmarried. However, between 1986 and 1988 the birth rate among the younger teens, age 15-17 rose 10%. The increase occurred in nearly all states, but most of the increase took place in three states California, Florida and Illinois. The increase occurred primarily among black and Hispanic teens and remains largely unexplained (Moore, 1990). In 1986-87 nearly half of teenage mothers were 19 years old and about two-thirds were white.

Marital status. Half of all white teenage mothers were married and living with their husbands, compared with only 6 percent of black teen mothers. However, teen marriages were much more likely to end in separation or divorce than the marriages of older women.

Living arrangements. Eighty-two percent of unmarried teen mothers age 15-17 and 65 percent of unmarried teen mothers age 18-19 lived with their parents or relatives in the first year after birth. Twenty-two percent of married teen mothers lived with their parents following the birth (Adams & Williams, 1991). Black mothers are much more likely to live with their families than white. Young mothers who live with their parents are less likely to drop out of school, but the reasons for this are not clear. Among both blacks and whites, only about 1 in 7 teen mothers lives only with her child or children.

Education. Nearly half of all teens who have a child before their 18th birthday, and about one quarter of those who have a child between 18 and 19, will not graduate from high school. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school compared with women who delay childbearing. Teen mothers who get married are more likely to drop out of school than unmarried teen mothers.

While it is clearly logistically difficult for teen mothers who are responsible for a child to remain in school, these difficulties are apparently not the only reason or even the major reason for their dropping out. Research suggests that many teen mothers were having problems in school before they became pregnant. In one study up to one-third of the teens had dropped out of school before becoming pregnant. Other studies suggest that many school-age mothers have lower levels of basic skills, lower I.Q's, and lower educational expectations than delayed childbearers.

Poverty. As a group young mothers are very likely to be poor during the first few years after giving birth. Over 40 percent of all young mothers who first had children as teenagers during the previous five years were in families with incomes below poverty in 1985-1986. 81 percent of unmarried teen mothers living with only their children had incomes below the poverty line in 1985 and 1986. Living with husbands and living with relatives sharply reduced the likelihood of being poor.

Sources of private support. The large majority of unmarried teen mothers clearly receive considerable in-kind support from their families in the years immediately after their child's birth in the form of housing, child care, and shared living expenses. Married teen mothers obtain financial support from their husbands, the vast majority of whom were at least two years older than their wives. Although in 1986 and 1987 nearly 40 percent of husbands of the young mothers had not completed school, 75 percent were employed and another 7 percent were looking for work. Little child support is officially provided to teen mothers by absent fathers, although some studies suggest that unofficially quite a number may provide sporadic financial assistance and in-kind support (see Ooms, November 1990).

Teen mothers on welfare

National data reports that there are an estimated 213,000 teenage parents, age 13-19 receiving AFDC payments, approximately 7 percent of the adult recipients (Ways and Means Committee, 1990, p. 603). The vast majority of these parents are women. However, there is reason to believe this figure may be an undercount. There are two ways a teenage mother can receive welfare payments to support herself and her dependent child. She can receive the check herself as the custodial parent. In this case she and her child(ren) constitute the 'filing unit'. Alternatively, if she is a minor and she and her child are living with her parent who also receives welfare, she and her child are usually included on her mother's check. In this situation she and her child do not constitute a separate filing unit.

Thus, some of these so-called 'sub-families' are hidden in the statistics with the consequence that some teen mothers receiving welfare are not identified as such in the quality control data reported to the federal government by the states. Hence, the reported national total is an underestimate of the number of AFDC teen mothers, but it is not clear how significant this is. This problem of sub-families also makes it difficult to identify these younger teen mothers for participation in FSA or other programs. Presumably state reporting systems will begin to more clearly identify the teen mother population in the future.

The AFDC rules regarding which members of the family are to be included in the filing unit within a household and whose income is included for establishing eligibility are very complicated and have undergone several recent changes at the federal level (see Committee on Ways and Means, 1990). They also vary by state. In some situations states will treat a three generation family as two separate assistance units. In some situations, although the teen mother gets her own check, her mother is the designated 'payee'. In other situations a minor teen mother automatically qualifies as emancipated and gets her own check, even if she is living with her parents. Since 1984, the federal rules require that when they live in the same household a portion of the adult parent's income be included in establishing the teenage parent's eligibility for AFDC.

Patterns of welfare receipt. A Congressional Budget Office study analyzing data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLS), which followed a cohort of youth from 1979, provides a more detailed portrait of the patterns of teen mothers' welfare receipt than did the original study of Bane and Ellwood. This NLS analysis found that nearly half of teen mothers will receive AFDC assistance for some period of time within five years of their first child's birth. At any one time just over one-fourth of all teen mothers receive AFDC benefits. But there is considerable movement on and off welfare among this population (Adams & Williams, 1990).

Roughly half of all the young mothers in the NLS who received welfare left the program for more than three months within one year of first getting benefits. And almost three-quarters had initial spells that lasted less than three years. Black teen mothers however had longer spells on welfare than whites. This may be partly because they were less likely to get married and partly because unmarried black mothers were more likely to have a second child than white unmarried mothers. Older teenage mothers tend to leave AFDC more quickly than their younger counterparts.

Frank Furstenberg's 17 year study of the experiences of roughly 300 black Baltimore women (and their children) who first gave birth as teenagers confirms many of these findings about patterns of welfare receipt. However, it also highlights a sizeable group of the teen mothers, 30.2 percent of the sample, who never received AFDC over the 17 year period. In this study 4.5 percent of the sample were 'chronic' AFDC recipients and had received AFDC throughout the 17 years; about 20 percent were 'early exiters' and left AFDC within 1-2 years and about 31 percent were 'recidivists'

who had at least two spells on AFDC (see Harris, 1991 and study summary in Ooms and Herendeen, October 1989).

Among other interesting findings from the Baltimore study was the high degree of work orientation: a large proportion of the women worked while on welfare but this employment did not lift them out of dependency. Those who were involved in long spells of AFDC were more likely to supplement their AFDC check with earned income than those who had only short spells. In 1984, at the end of the 17 year study, although a quarter of the mothers remained on welfare, a quarter were working poor with incomes below $15,000, a quarter had modest incomes between $15,000-$24,999 and the remaining quarter had more economically secure family incomes exceeding $25,000.

Health Problems. Although studies of the AFDC population in general have highlighted their numerous health problems---some of which seriously constrain their employability---these have not been documented specifically for teenage mothers. Although adolescence is generally a healthy stage of life, teenagers' strong tendency to experiment and take risks leads to behavior---such as alcoholism and other drug use, smoking, suicide, and violence towards others---that may lead to death or injury and has other destructive results on their health and life opportunities. Small studies and program reports serving teenage mothers have identified many cases of depression, physical abuse, smoking and drug use, venereal disease and, increasingly AIDS, but these have not been the subject of any national studies.

There are also no studies of the health status and incidence of disability of AFDC infants and young children born to teenage mothers. But it is well known that low-income mothers, especially teen mothers, are at higher risk of giving birth to low birth weight babies who would be expected to have higher rates of illness and disability. Their children's periodic illness and chronic handicapping conditions can also seriously constrain teen mothers' employability.

Child Care Usage. There is very little information available about the adequacy, patterns, and preferences of child care among low-income and AFDC women partly because they have not generally been employed in large numbers. However, the studies that do exist, especially the Rockefeller funded Minority Female Single Parent Demonstration Program, have found that low-income and AFDC women who work or are in training most commonly use relatives to provide care for their children, or alternatively, informal family day care homes in the neighborhood. There is some evidence that these mothers would be interested in more formal child care provided in centers for their older preschool children. One of their major concerns was the lack of child care when their children were sick. Children's illness was the most common reason for absence from the training program. (For a summary of the MFSP child care study see Maynard, Kisker, and Kerachsky, 1990. For a summary of this and other studies see Ooms and Herendeen, January, 1989.)

These data, in general, provide further reinforcement for the FSA's targeting the youngest mothers who drop out of school. However, they also suggest the magnitude and complexity of the challenges involved in trying to help them get back into the mainstream and become solely financially responsible for their children.

LESSONS FROM TEEN PARENT DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

(Sources: Corbett, et al., 1989; Greenberg and Sherman, 1989; Jackson, 1989; Hershey, 1990; Polit & O'Hara, 1989; Polit, Kisker, and Cohen, 1989; Quinn, et al., 1991; Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, 1990)

By the early eighties a consensus was forged over the general principles underlying new efforts to reform the welfare system. This led to the development and testing of various strategies to increase the employability and work effort of AFDC recipients. Various welfare-to-work demonstration programs mounted in a number of the states under the federal WIN waivers, and privately funded demonstration projects such as the Rockefeller Foundation's Minority Female Single Parent Demonstration (MFSP) began to confront the complex challenges of trying to change the behavior and circumstances of very poor mothers responsible for the care of young children.

There began to be a greater appreciation for the various personal barriers that stood in the way of these women becoming self-sufficient such as their low education and job skills, scant work experience, health problems, and their needs for child care for school age children. However, until very recently remarkably little research has been directed to examining what kinds of support services AFDC mothers needed to overcome these barriers, how to deliver these services, and whether they were effective. (Although the California work/welfare demonstration GAIN program report provided data on the utilization of school age child care services, the MFSP was the first major study to examine the issue of preschool child care support services in some depth, partly because many of their participants had preschool children.)

The group that was learned the least about in these programs was those AFDC mothers with children under six years of age since, for the most part, they were exempted from the various work welfare programs in the seventies and early eighties. However, in part influenced by the research findings about the high rates of long-term dependency of the youngest mothers and in part reflecting changing societal attitudes towards maternal employment, the reform proposals that were eventually incorporated in the FSA all revised this assumption and targeted, to one degree or another, mothers with preschool children. The generally accepted argument underlying this shift in attitude was that the original intent of the AFDC program to enable young mothers to care for their own children was no longer appropriate in view of the rising rates of employment of non-AFDC mothers with preschool children. Moreover, studies suggested that maternal employment was, in the long run, on balance, beneficial for seriously disadvantaged children (if the child care was at least adequate).

We present below a brief description of several demonstration programs which built on lessons from these earlier work/welfare program initiatives to target teenage parents specifically and test various strategies for improving their employability. The programs used a combination of requirements, sanctions, and incentives; varied in the emphasis placed on individualized services; and whom they targeted. Since these programs are for the most part still underway, the final results documenting program impact are not yet available. Nonetheless, the programs have accumulated a wealth of descriptive, in-depth information about the mothers and their families, their response to the program, and document the varied challenges faced in operating and implementing the services. Thus these demonstrations provide many insights that are relevant to implementation of the FSA. (The Manpower Development Research Corporation has conducted two carefully evaluated demonstration projects specifically designed to target teenage mothers---Project Redirection and New Chance---but they will not be discussed here, partly because participation in them was voluntary, and also because they have been presented in an earlier report. See Ooms and Herendeen, 1989.)

The Teenage Parent Demonstration in Illinois and New Jersey
(Sources: Hershey, 1990; Polit et al., 1989)

The Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD) is an initiative sponsored by two offices within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services---the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation and the Office of Family Assistance, Family Support Administration. Its full name explains the purpose---Demonstration of Innovative Approaches to Reduce Long Term AFDC Dependency Among Teenage Parent. The TPD is a large, rigorously designed field test of the implications of mandatory self-sufficiency-oriented activities as a condition for continued AFDC eligibility. It thus has considerable implications for the Family Support Act.

Public welfare agencies in the state of Illinois and New Jersey were awarded grants to operate programs in three urban, low-income communities. In Illinois, the program, *Project Advance*, is situated in the south side of Chicago, in New Jersey, *Teen Progress*, is in the cities of Newark and Camden. The program began serving clients in mid-1987 and will continue operations through 1991. The program is being carefully evaluated under a contract with Mathematica Policy Research Inc. The key components and some initial findings of the program are as follows.

Eligibility: The target population of teenage parents required to participate in the demonstration included all teenage parents under age 20 who were caring for a single child and began receiving AFDC for the first time for that child. (These could be heads of households receiving AFDC on their own or could be included in the AFDC case of a parent or other relative). This target group is in some ways much broader (e.g. it includes parents under age 16 and those attending school) and in other ways narrower (e.g. it excludes parents with more than one child) than the group targeted by the FSA. Thus only about 30 percent of TPD participants would have been mandatory participants in the JOBS program, although another third would have been at high risk of becoming "JOBS mandatory" (See Figure 1 p. 22).

Program services. All teenage mothers who met these criteria received a notice from the welfare office that they were required to attend a baseline intake session. After attending this session they were then randomly assigned to the enhanced services group or to the control group. The program group were then required to participate in appropriate education, training, or employment activities as long as they were receiving AFDC. If they failed to do so, after appropriate warnings, sanctions were applied in the form of a reduction in the AFDC payment.

Services included case management support, child care assistance, allowances for transportation and other training-related expenses, and a variety of workshops designed to develop the teenager's personal and parenting life skills, motivation and readiness to pursue continued education, training, and employment. Within these parameters the sites operated the programs somewhat differently, for example, in designing the timing, intensity, duration, and content of the workshops.

Those teenagers assigned to control status could not receive the special services and were not required to participate in education, training, or employment although they were free to pursue these activities on their own.

Program Participation. Between July 1987 and April 1990 over 6,000 eligible teenage parents were assigned randomly to one of the two groups. Over 80 percent of all eligible teenagers enrolled in the programs and 85 percent of those enrolled subsequently participated in at least some of the program activities. Participation rates varied significantly by site due in part to program emphasis, local opportunities, and the characteristics of the population being served.

Program Sanctions. Warning notices for non-compliance with program requirements were issued to between 80-90 percent of the teenagers in New Jersey and 42 percent in Chicago. However, sanctions were actually imposed on between one-fifth and one-third of the participants. (New Jersey requested grant reductions for 35 percent, and Chicago for 22 percent of its participants.) Preliminary evidence suggests that both the warning notices and the actual implementation of financial penalties helped increase participation in program activities. Focus group discussions with participants highlighted many examples of teen parents who were initially very reluctant and resistant but ended up being enthusiastic about participating in the program.

Implementation Lessons

A number of preliminary lessons have been learned through the TPD about the operational problems and challenges of targeting young teen mothers. For example:

---It was often difficult to accurately identify eligible teenagers, in part due to the problem of finding teen mothers who are coded as dependents on their mothers AFDC grant and inaccurate school enrollment figures.
---The young mothers who would be required to participate in JOBS are likely to be very disadvantaged, many come from families with multiple problems and thus will need intensive and varied educational and support services.
---Attendance at intake and workshops was facilitated by accommodating to school schedules, providing on-site child care, and notifying the teen parents' own parent (when she was a dependent child in an AFDC case).
---Much was learned about how to conduct group meetings and workshops in a manner that encouraged attendance and effective learning.
---Case managers, who are a critical component of the program, need to be assigned immediately upon enrollment and personally introduced to the teen mother to overcome her view of the welfare agency as simply a faceless bureaucracy. Case managers combine and personalize both aspects of the program---the "carrot" (personal encouragement, etc.) and the "stick" (insistence on participation).

TDP evaluation

The TDP evaluation has five components: (l) the impact study involving random assignment to a participant and control group; 2) process and implementation evaluation which will provide guidelines for replication; 3) study of child care supply and demand in the demonstration sites; 4) a cost-effectiveness analysis; and, 5) an in-depth study of the experiences, motivations, and circumstances of program participants.

Family and cultural factors and barriers
(Source: Polit et al., 1989; Quiroz and Tosca, 1990)

Preliminary findings from the TPD focus group discussions with a sample of participants confirm the impressions of other qualitative studies about some of the difficult family and environmental circumstances teenage mothers face and how they manage to cope with them.

---The teenage mothers report that for most of them who are living with their parents or other relatives their families are an enormous source of financial help, practical assistance (e.g. with

caring for the child), and psychological and emotional support. Many teen mothers enjoy their new role and their family provides positive reinforcement for the rewards of motherhood.

---Yet teen mothers, as many new mothers, found the demands of their infants and toddlers very exhausting and often quite nerve wracking. They found the health problems of their children particularly difficult to cope with. While they had many negative things to say about the experience of being on welfare, they highly valued having a Medicaid card.

---The majority of teen mothers lived in difficult economic circumstances and disintegrated neighborhoods where crime, violence, and drug abuse were rife, all of which added to their stress.

---Many of these mothers had continued contact with the baby's fathers, but relatively few had plans to marry him. In general, most were not ready for long-term relationships with men or for marriage, they did not want to give up their autonomy, and some were quite distrustful of men. They resented and misunderstood official efforts at child support enforcement, and feared they would cut them off from the father's "under the table" contributions.

---A significant number of these teenage mothers talked about serious family problems which added to their own difficulties, including family members being in jail, involved with drugs, or experiencing other severe emotional or physical problems.

Cultural Factors. There is little discussion in the literature on teen mothers about cultural issues. This is surprising considering rates of teen births and school drop out are so high in black and Hispanic communities. Some new insights into the distinctive welfare experiences of different minority groups will soon be forthcoming from three qualitative studies funded by the Ford Foundation. The Council of La Raza, the National Puerto Rican Coalition and the National Urban League are all conducting focus group discussions with low-income and welfare teen mothers. These studies are designed to explore young mothers' attitudes towards, and experiences with, welfare and employment and explore some of the gaps and problems involved in implementation of the FSA.

Some early findings from these studies emphasize that Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans are especially hard populations to serve in the FSA due to their human capital deficiencies and language problems, especially of the recent immigrants. And while there is some evidence that low-income Mexican American women no longer hold traditional attitudes towards marriage, they are still very reluctant to place their child in the care of strangers. Since their relatives, who are often working themselves or otherwise unavailable, are a diminishing source of child care, this attitude poses a barrier to their participation in the FSA.

Learnfare, Wisconsin
(Sources: Corbett, et al., 1989; Greenberg & Sherman, 1989; Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, 1990; Quinn, et al., 1991)

The Learnfare program in Wisconsin is part of the state's welfare reform initiative that targets all teen AFDC recipients who have not completed their high school education or an equivalent. The original proposal was put forward in 1987 by Governor J. Thompson, and was originally designed to apply only to school age teenage custodial parents but was later expanded to all AFDC teenagers age 13-19. It requires all teens to attend school or an alternative program and if absent for more than two unexcused days in any one month, the household is sanctioned by a reduction in

the AFDC grant. Teen parents are additionally provided with child care and transportation to help them attend school. Teen parents not living with adults other than their own parents are not included. (It was considered unfair to impose financial sanctions on foster parents or other caretakers.) Approximately 30,000 teens each month are covered by the program, of these about 5,000 are teen parents.

In order to mount this program Wisconsin had to obtain several waivers from the federal government. One of these waivers exempted the state from FSA requirements for assessment, counseling, and supportive services. The program became fully operational in September 1988 and is now incorporated into the state's JOBS program under the Family Support Act.

Learnfare was the first statewide program to impose sanctions on AFDC teenagers, including teen parents for non-attendance in school. The Governor stated the basic premise behind the law "that a high school education is a minimum credential to insure Wisconsin citizens will be able to provide for themselves and their families," (Quinn, et al., p. 1). Although the legislation gained broad support from the legislature initially, it has since become mired in controversy. Opponents have argued that the policy is punitive, unfairly targets only AFDC families, causes economic hardships for families who cannot control their teenagers, and fails to address the causes for teens' failures in school. Proponents claim some success in increased rates of school attendance, but both sceptics and opponents point out that there is no hard data yet to draw upon to assess outcomes of the law.

Although appearing simple in design, the implementation of the program is highly complex. To operate successfully the program requires close cooperation and sharing of information between the education and welfare agencies at state, county, and school building levels. School officials have to decide how to apply the non-attendance criteria and communicate these monthly on each case to income maintenance/ eligibility workers who have to decide on how to apply exemption criteria, whether to impose sanctions, etc.

There have been two evaluations of Learnfare to date. The first was conducted by the Legislative Audit Bureau and examined the administration of the new program, the second was conducted by the University of Wisconsin and was designed to assess outcomes. The major findings of the Legislative Audit Bureau report, published in July 1990, included the following.

---Agency cooperation was not sufficient to ensure adequate program management;
---Schools provide inaccurate attendance reports and use different definitions and standards of attendance;
---So many errors had been made by school and welfare officials that over 70 percent of the numerous sanctions that were applied were disallowed upon appeal.
---Those sanctioned did not generally receive services supposedly available to non-attending students and their families under two separate but related programs---the Habitual Truant program and the Children at Risk program. (Learnfare itself did not provide services to non-compliers.) Moreover the school social work staff had caseloads far too heavy to follow up on habitual truants.

Although some attempts were made to improve the data reporting and agency cooperation and provide some additional services to teens, the report of the federally required evaluation conducted by the University of Wisconsin's Employment and Training Institute essentially confirmed the Audit Bureau's findings. This University study was designed to assess the effect of Learnfare on school attendance, school completion, school performance, and the incidence of teen childbearing. The researchers found that the administrative data had such serious errors and omissions that the

agencies involved were unable to provide reliable outcome measures. The report did, however, provide some additional details relevant to the program's implementation.

One of the most striking findings was that although the FSA specifically targeted teen parents who had dropped out of school, under the Learnfare program nearly half of the teen parents coded as non-graduates had been exempted from school attendance under the program's rules. The rules stated that they could be exempted if they were lacking school credits and were not expected to graduate by age twenty. (Only about 2 percent of the teen AFDC dependents who were not themselves parents were exempt under this provision.) On the other hand teen AFDC parents who were non-exempt and subject to sanctions were far more likely to be sanctioned than teen AFDC dependents.

Learning, Earning, and Parenting Program (LEAP), Ohio

The program known as LEAP is Ohio's statewide demonstration program focusing on teen custodial parents and is a separate but coordinated component of the state's implementation of the JOBS program. It was originally proposed in late 1987 and became operational in September 1989 in all 88 counties. In contrast to Learnfare's primary emphasis on requirements and sanctions, Ohio's program has a unique combination of monetary sanctions for non-attendance and bonuses for enrollment and attendance. In the LEAP program, all teen custodial parents under age 20 who are receiving ADC (either on their own case or as AFDC dependents) are required to regularly attend school or an alternative education program leading to a high school diploma or GED.

Teens who meet LEAP's attendance requirements---who miss no more than four school days per month and have fewer than three unexcused absences---have a bonus of $62 added to their household's monthly welfare grant. Teens are also eligible upon enrollment for a one time $62 enrollment bonus which is repeated each year upon re-enrollment. Teens who meet the requirements are also eligible for child care, transportation assistance, case management services, and a summer job provided through the JTPS system. A waiver from the Department of Agriculture was obtained so that the bonus does not result in a reduction in food stamps.

Teens who do not meet the requirements do not earn the bonus and those who have three or more unexcused absences in a month have their grants reduced by $62.

The case manager must conduct an initial in-person assessment of teen's educational, social and supportive needs, monitor attendance and services received, and keep in touch with the income maintenance worker as necessary about the attendance requirement.

Ohio is a county administered state so each county administers the program somewhat differently, for example in the extent of outreach, in the use of case managers, and so forth. Ohio is making considerable efforts to set up an efficient data reporting system and improve the quality of their data on attendance, etc.

In Cleveland additional monies have been obtained to conduct a demonstration of an enhanced services program within LEAP. These additional services include placing paraprofessional outreach workers in a number of high schools and contracting with community organizations to provide outreach services to teen parents who are not complying with the program's requirements and are being sanctioned.

LEAP evaluation. A rigorous, independent evaluation of LEAP was required by the federal government as a condition of the waivers granted. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation received a five year contract to conduct the evaluation which consists of an implementation and process study, an impact study (experimental design), and a benefit-cost study in 12 randomly selected Ohio counties. MDRC is also conducting an evaluation of the enhanced services program in Cleveland. The report of early implementation findings will be published in the spring of 1991; an interim report is due in January 1992 and the final impact and benefit cost findings in February 1994.

Family Independence Program (FIP), Washington
(Sources: Family Matters, April 1990)

The Family Independence Program is a statewide AFDC/food stamp demonstration program which has been operating since. In contrast to the TPD, Learnfare, and LEAP programs, there are no participation requirements in FIP. (The state operates the program under federal waiver authority.) It is an entirely voluntary program which offers teens a variety of services and supports, which did not previously exist in the state, and a five percent financial bonus if they attend school. The FIP's Teen Parent Program serves parents up to age 22.

Services include special orientations for pregnant and parenting teens (including teen custodial fathers); self-help groups and workshops designed specifically for teens, and support services needed to help them stay in school such as payment for child care, tuition, transportation, books, and supplies. A critical component is the program staff who are specially trained to work with teens and provide individual counseling, referral, and case coordination to help them move through school, training, and appropriate employment. Teenage parents have priority for subsidized child care services.

The Director believes that the voluntary aspects of the program and its total reliance on positive incentives is working well. This is based both on the young parents' reports and on the fact that there has been a tremendous growth in the number of participants, for example by March 1989 they had over 3,000 teen parents enrolled in the program, an increase of more than 1,000 in only eight months.

Adolescent Family Life Office/Department of Labor Teen Parent Employability Demonstrations (TPED)
(Source: Cohen, 1991)

In the fall of 1986, six programs providing a variety of health, educational, and social services to pregnant and parenting teenagers, funded through grants from the Adolescent Family Life Office, DHHS, received additional monies from the Department of Labor (DOL) to include additional services designed to enhance the teen parents' employability. These new services could include education/employment counseling for adolescent mothers, child care services, employment counseling/job training for the fathers of the children born to adolescent mothers in the program, and social work counseling for the fathers. Each program targeted a somewhat different sub-group within this population. One worked primarily with school drop outs, another with homeless youth, and another with young fathers. Although the original intent was that the TPED projects would be closely linked with the DOL's JTPA programs in those communities, this linkage did not happen. Many of the participants in this demonstration received AFDC.

The DOL contracted with the Urban Institute to evaluate the employability components of each of the projects. The evaluation aimed to describe the implementation process and document the outcomes for participants but the study design was not experimental (no control groups). Thus, although there were several positive outcomes for the participants (such as increased educational achievement) it is not possible to know how much of this success to attribute to the program or whether other environmental factors were responsible. It turned out that only three of the sites had data that was usable for the study (Tucson, Savannah and San Francisco).

The study report emphasized several program related factors that appeared to be very important to achieve successful program implementation. First, successful case management programs relied heavily on the development of a strong network of community-based programs that were willing and able to provide additional services to teen parents. Second, it was important for the case manager to maintain post-program contact. Third, the experience of these six programs suggests that some targets groups are more easily served than others (the homeless teen parents were very difficult to involve) and that programs continue to have difficulty recruiting and retaining the young fathers.

Education Based Demonstrations and Strategies
(Source: Academy for Educational Development, 1988; Earle, 1990; Education and Human Services Consortium, 1989; and Melaville & Blank, 1991; Levy and Copple, 1990)

The education and welfare communities were quick to acknowledge that the key to successful implementation of the FSA was to forge effective partnerships between them at state and local levels. Unlike earlier welfare-to-work reform efforts which focused primarily on job search, job training and employment activities, the FSA mandates that educational services must be available to all JOBS participants. The role of the education sector is even more critical with regard to the youngest AFDC recipients, especially parents of school age. Some school systems have had a considerable history of attempting to keep truants and 'at-risk' youth in school, and many have long been aware that teenagers who became pregnant and gave birth accounted for a large proportion of the female students who dropped out of school. It has also been recognized that some small portion of the male drop-out population is a response to fatherhood, when the young father decides he should get a job to support his child.

How have schools been responding to the problems and needs of pregnant teens and teen parents? What has been learned in any of the school-based demonstration programs?

In the early seventies, in response to the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in schools receiving federal funds, school systems began to review the common policy of dismissing pregnant teens and teen parents from school. Many school systems, especially in large cities, established special classes for pregnant teens and teen mothers, which enabled them to complete their high school education, and provided various support services. Other schools made some efforts to help pregnant teens and teen parents remain in regular classes. In some schools day care centers were established in the school itself, or nearby, as a resource for these teen mothers. In some communities teen pregnancy and parenting programs developed close linkages with schools.

Nevertheless, local studies and program experience suggested that many schools ignored the spirit and intent of the law and continued with policies that made it difficult for pregnant teens and teen parents to stay in school. A survey in 1986-87 of school policies, programs, and services for teen parents in nine urban school districts, conducted by the Academy for Educational Development,

revealed that these district schools had a long way to go in understanding the scope of the problem in their schools and providing needed supports and encouragement to teen parents.

The study found that there were serious inadequacies in the data available about the numbers of teen mothers; programs for pregnant teens and teen parents were quite isolated from other dropout prevention efforts; schools have very little contact with other agencies that assist pregnant and parenting teens, and there was a general lack of official concern and concerted effort to develop policies or practices that would benefit them (Academy, 1988).

Several recent publications have reported on a number of innovative community-based programs, aimed at providing comprehensive services to high-risk youth, which include as a key component collaborative strategies across agencies and programs (see Levy and Copple 1990; Melaville and Blank, 1991). We report briefly here on one school-based demonstration program that focuses more narrowly on the goal of keeping pregnant teens and teen parents in school since this is most closely related to the goal of the FSA.

Counselor/Advocates Demonstration Project
(Source: Earle, 1990)

In 1986 the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) launched a three year demonstration project in two high schools, one in suburban Prince George's County, Maryland, the other in Milwaukee to test the use of counselor/advocates in helping teen mothers stay in school.

The central idea behind the program was to provide one person in the school---a "counselor/advocate"---to act as a personal case manager to assure that the individual pregnant teen or teen parent received the personal encouragement and support and had access to needed services. The counselor/advocates had significant caseloads---ranging from 50-109---but were perceived by students as having sufficient time for them. By the second year of the program both schools had organized a parenting class for the students and worked closely with a public health nurse.

A critical element leading to the acceptance of the program by the school and parent community was the creation of an interagency problem-solving group (representatives from the school and community agencies). The group met regularly and served the function of raising the awareness of faculty and staff about the difficulties pregnant and parenting students face, developing systems of interagency collaboration, and helping to modify school and agency policies and practices to meet the special needs of these students.

The principal success of the NASBE sponsored program was that 80 percent and above of the students remained in school and at least two-thirds were able to earn enough credits to move forward to the next grade. Attendance remained a difficult problem throughout the students participation in the program. About 60 percent of the students in both schools maintained or improved their attendance rates, while about 40 percent had declines. Only 63 percent of program participants in one school had an attendance rate of 70 percent or better, only 50 percent in the other school. Absences were frequently related to day care emergencies.

The role of the counselor/advocate in this program was to:

---Provide academic services through advising the student about schedules and keeping track of credits and their academic progress. They worked with the school personnel to arrange flexible and partial schedules when problems with child care occurred, and could inform students about alternative educational programs.

---Track attendance, encourage the student to attend (e.g. by phoning when there was an absence), and work with attendance administrators to ensure that problems related to health, medical appointments, child care, etc. were considered valid excuses.

---Provide access to needed health, child care, and other social services. The teen parents were grateful to have someone help them deal with large, impersonal bureaucracies.

---Provide counseling with personal and family problems. The counselor/advocate in one school led bi-weekly group support and counseling sessions. The counselor/advocate often spoke with the teen's parents by phone or in person and in one school a grandmother support group was formed to help these women support their pregnant and parenting teen daughters. By the third year of the program both schools began working more systematically with male teens.

---Provide advice and guidance on employment opportunities.

---Keep careful records of all program participants.

One of the central lessons of this demonstration for implementation of the FSA is that even with a highly supportive, accessible, and personalized program, it is very difficult for low-income, pregnant teens and teen mothers to maintain regular attendance in school and make significant progress. Although an encouraging proportion can be helped to avoid dropping out.

TEEN PARENT PROVISIONS OF THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT

(Source: *Family Matters,* January and April 1990; Federal Register, 1989; Greenberg, 1990)

Title II of the Family Support Act requires states to establish the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. The purpose of JOBS is defined in the regulations "to assure that needy families with children obtain the education, training, and employment that will help avoid long-term welfare dependence." Its basic underlying philosophy is that of a social contract: the government will provide the individual with cash and in-kind assistance and services, but in return the individual must reciprocate by participating in efforts designed to encourage self-sufficiency and fulfill family responsibilities.

To this end the JOBS program is intended to encourage, assist, and require applicants and recipients of AFDC to "fulfill their responsibilities to support their children by preparing for, accepting, and retaining employment."

Mandated activities. The program requires states to provide a variety of educational, training, and job placement services to the individuals to enable them to acquire the necessary skills leading to employment, and provides a variety of necessary supportive services including guaranteeing child care, transitional child care, and medical assistance.

Eligibility. The Act requires that any custodial parent receiving AFDC who is under age 20 and has not successfully completed a high school education must enroll in educational activities leading toward a high school diploma or its equivalent on a full-time basis irregardless of the age of her child. If it is determined that the 18-19 year old parent is not making good progress, or the educational requirement is not appropriate, the parent must then participate in a training or work experience instead.

Teenage AFDC parents who have completed high school, like older AFDC mothers, must participate in the JOBS program once their child reaches the age of three. Two states, New Jersey and Wisconsin, have lowered the age to two, four states have opted for age one (Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio and Arkansas), and Oklahoma has a requirement for participation below age one.

Exemptions. A teenage AFDC recipient may be exempted from the program for a number of reasons: illness or incapacity; is needed in the home because of illness or incapacity of another family member; already works 30 hours or more a week; is a child under age 16; attends school full time at the time of referral to JOBS; or is in the last trimester of pregnancy or has delivered within the last six months. In addition, the state agency may establish additional criteria to excuse custodial parents under age 18 from this school attendance requirement. Teenage parents who are exempt may still volunteer for the program.

Special target groups. Custodial parents under age 24 who have not completed high school and are not enrolled in school are one of four special target groups considered at high risk of welfare dependency, which the state must spend at least 55 percent of the JOBS funds on to receive the full federal match. States must give first consideration to volunteers when serving target group members.

It is important to note that the fact that a teen parent is non-exempt and required to participate in the law does not necessarily mean she will participate. States will not have sufficient resources to serve everyone and will have to make choices about which of the various target groups and AFDC clients to serve first.

AFDC-UP. The FSA mandated that all states provide financial assistance to two-parent families in which both were, essentially, unemployed. In terms of the JOBS program, states may choose whether the second parent in a two parent family receiving AFDC-UP is required to participate in the JOBS program (including educational activities) or is exempt.

Minor Parent Living Arrangements. The law permits states to require that certain minor parents should live with a designated adult (parent, legal guardian, foster parent) in order to receive AFDC, and that adult be the designated payee. (If states choose to make such a requirement it may mean that since the adult parent's income will be included in the determination of eligibility, some teen parents will no longer be eligible for their AFDC benefit.)

JOBS Related Services. The state must establish a broad range of services and activities as part of their JOBS program. These include: educational activities (high school, GED, literacy classes), job skills training, job readiness, job search and job placement. In addition, the state may offer work supplementation (subsidizing low-wage employment), Community Work Experience Program, etc.

Supportive Services. The state agency must guarantee certain JOBS participants transportation and child care (either through direct provision or reimbursement), including one year of transitional child care and Medicaid after entering employment if they meet certain criteria.

Employability Plan. The state agency must make an initial assessment of the educational, child care, and other supportive needs as well as the skills, prior work experience, and employability of each participant, including a review of family circumstances.

Contract. The state may require a written contract which specifies the participants obligations, the activities to be engaged in, and the services the state must provide. The state may assign a case manager to each participant and the participant's family whose role is to assist the family to obtain the services needed to participate effectively.

Sanctions. If an individual "fails without good cause" to participate in the program or to accept employment, the individual's portion of the welfare check may be cut. "Good cause" includes child care is not available and the state agency fails to provide such care, employment or participation would require such an individual to work more than 20 hours per week, or the employment would result in the family experiencing a net loss of income. Otherwise the definition of "good cause" is left up to the states. States, moreover, have considerable latitude with respect to how strong an emphasis to place on monetary sanctions as compared with first trying conciliation designed to identify and resolve participation problems. States do not have to impose sanctions.

Services to non-custodial parents. The Secretary of HHS must permit up to five states to provide services under the JOBS program, on a voluntary or mandatory basis, to non-custodial parents, usually meaning fathers, who are unemployed and unable to meet their child support obligations. (Plans are well underway to mount demonstration programs in these five states with funds provided by private foundations [see Ooms, November 1990]. Teenage fathers will be involved in some of these programs.)

Demonstration Programs. The Act authorizes several new demonstration grant programs one of which was designed to focus on counseling and services to high-risk teenagers, but these have not yet received any appropriations.

FSA IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has completed a 50 state survey of the status of state's implementation of the teen parent provisions of the Family Support Act. This survey identified which states have passed specific legislation regarding JOBS and teen parents. Seven of the states and one county were selected for a more in-depth review of initial implementation policies. A report will be forthcoming in the spring of 1991 (see Hill, May 1991). It will illustrate the wide range of state responses and choices, implementation issues, and the serious constraints imposed by lack of resource availability which affects how many teen parents are being required by states to participate in JOBS.

The experience of the state and site demonstrations described briefly above raises a wealth of questions related to the design and operations of the teen parent provisions of the FSA. As discussed above, we await more definite findings from the demonstration evaluation studies about the relative impact of "carrots" versus "sticks" strategies. In addition, there are a number of questions that are especially relevant to a family perspective.

- Which are the most appropriate sub-groups within the young parent population that should be targeted to prevent long-term dependency? Should states aim to spread their resources thinly over the entire eligible population (with the risk of "creaming," that is those who benefit are

those who would probably have become independent of AFDC anyway without the program)? Or should they concentrate more intensive, individualized, and costly services on those most in need and most difficult to serve, who are presently most likely to be exempted from the FSA provisions, for example teen parents with serious substance abuse or psychological or health problems? Studies of work/welfare programs to date do not have a clear answer to this question of the relative effectiveness of high-cost versus low-cost services (see Friedlander & Gueron, 1990).

- Some are concerned that providing bonuses and services to a sub-group, such as the AFDC teen parent who has dropped out of school, creates the wrong message to teen parents who are managing their responsibilities and staying in school without applying for AFDC, or indeed the wrong message to teenagers who successfully avoid becoming parents.

- What are the results of sanctions that are sustained over a period of time on the teen mothers, their child(ren), and the households they live in? Since the large majority, especially of the younger teens, live with their own parent(s) or other relatives and can be expected to pool income and expenses, the impact of a reduction in the welfare grant will be felt undoubtedly by the whole household. Welfare benefits, even when combined with food stamps, are already so low---in every state except Alaska they are below the federal poverty level---that it is amazing how these families are able to cover even basic expenses, especially when they do not receive subsidized housing. How then do these family households who are already living at the extreme margin cope economically when their AFDC check is cut? What expenditures do they give up? How do the cuts affect their housing, nutrition, etc? How do teen's who live on their own with their child and are in even more dire economic straits cope with sanctioned cuts in their AFDC payments?

- On the more positive side, it would be useful to know how the financial bonuses in the Ohio and Washington programs affect the teen and her family? Does the teen herself get to choose how to spend the money? Or does the bonus simply go into the household pot?

- The central assumption underlying requirements and sanctions for the majority of teens and teen parents who live in their family households is that adult parents (often themselves AFDC recipients) need to be held accountable for their youth's actions. The corollary to this assumption is that many teens/ teen mothers need their family's encouragement, support, and/or firm guidance to stay in school and complete their education. It is this assumption about parental responsibility which underlies state laws and county ordinances prosecuting parents for their child's debts, truancy, or delinquency.

While this philosophy has considerable public appeal, its application raises some puzzling dilemmas for programs. There are multiple and complex reasons why teens and teen parents do not attend school. The demonstration programs and the FSA are designed to overcome some of the practical barriers such as child care and transportation, and individual barriers such as the teens' low skills and low self-esteem. Yet many of their personal difficulties are reflections of, and embedded in, their family circumstances and problems. These barriers are essentially not addressed by the provisions and services offered in the demonstration programs or the FSA. Although those programs that incorporate case managers or counselor/ advocates can sometimes work on the family issues. Some of the situations that arise are as follows.

--- In some families, especially from some Hispanic and Asian cultures, the cultural expectation is that a young mother should stay at home and care for her baby. To them family values are primary while the young mother's education and employment are of secondary importance.

Moreover, in these families there is strong reluctance and resistance to placing a child in the care of non-relatives. (See Quiroz and Tosca, 1990.) Thus some of these families can be expected to strongly resist a requirement to participate in JOBS. Yet, with the exception of the NASBE counselor/advocate program, none of the demonstrations included services to reach out to teen parents' families, especially those of minority culture, and help them understand the purpose of the requirements and sanction and help them accept and reinforce the program's goals.

--- In some families, parents are not able to control the behavior of their teens. Thus, the imposition of a sanction is likely to simply exacerbate an already difficult and conflictual family situation. In a few cases sanctions may lead to, or exacerbate, serious parental abuse. Yet none of the demonstrations specify the need to provide access to services designed to help teens resolve these conflicts with their parents and help them negotiate their differences. (See Quinn, et al., 1991.)

--- In many teen parents' families, the adults themselves experience many problems including serious economic, employment, and health problems, illiteracy, and destructive personal behaviors (such as substance abuse) which can contribute to teens' difficulties in managing their lives and responsibilities and being motivated to attend school or training. Yet none of the demonstrations to date have included a family-centered, multi-generational service strategy for such situations.

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